

My husband and I recently moved from a rented apartment into our first house. Although we are happy to finally be homeowners, we have been less than delighted with the avalanche of telemarketing calls that has accompanied our new status. I am at home during the days and it is not uncommon for me to receive two or three calls a day. In addition to completed calls, there is also at least one hang-up every day (and usually more). Although I now believe such hang-ups to be the result of predictive dialers, at first I admit I was actually scared. As a woman alone, to be constantly getting dead air calls was quite disturbing. Also, the time of day restrictions allowing telemarketers to call after 8 AM may have made a difference for many people, but for us -- who work flex schedules and generally sleep until at least 9 or 10 AM -- the constant morning interruptions function as a very much unwanted alarm.

Telemarketing is a tremendous nuisance, a waste of my time, a disturbance of my peace and quiet and an invasion of my privacy. It doesn't matter to me what they're selling. The calls from the phone companies are just as annoying as the ones from the local newspaper. It is all the more frustrating, therefore, that so few effective methods exist for addressing this problem. When I looked into how to have my name removed from telemarketing lists, I discovered that I would have to deal with each caller/company individually -- a tremendous burden given that I'm already being inconvenienced by these calls. Moreover, in practice, several telemarketers have hung up on me when I tried to request that I be placed on their "do not call" list. I also note that I had to independently research how to remove my name from telemarketers' call lists since such information is not widely known or disseminated.

I strongly support the creation of a national "do not call" list. Unlike the DMA's Telephone Preference Service, this list should be mandatory for all companies making unsolicited phone calls. Here I define "unsolicited" in the broadest sense possible to include companies that have identified my phone number through caller ID or Automatic Number Identification, companies with which I have done business in the past, tax-exempt nonprofit entities and companies with which I have an "established business relationship."

Thank you for your time and consideration.